If Zia's optimism is taken to mean that the SWO/PAEC project will be ready to deliver the goods by the end of the 1980's, it means that all other constraints have been overcome. A Kuwaiti newspaper last month said that Pakistan's bomb will be ready in the 1980s, this may provoke some to conclude that A.Q. Khan stole the secrets to make a bomb for Islam. Technologically, however, it can merely be classified as A.Q. Khan's Bomb !

Rise and Fall of Hafizullah Amin in Afghanistan

P.B. Sinha

History was reapeated in Afghanistan. Barely a little over three months ago, Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin had ousted President Noor Mohammad Taraki from power. Now on 27 December 1979, Mr. Amin himself fell a victim to a coup. He was not only deposed but executed along with several of his family members and staunch supporters. Babrak Karmal, leader of the erstwhile Parcham faction of the ruling People's Democratic Party of Aghanistan (PDPA) is the new President of Revolutionary Council and the General Secretary of the PDPA.

Hafizullah Amin, a charismatic and revolutionary who, as the Khalq's military commissar, for five years, performed the exremely dangerous job of imparting political education to the Afghan armed forces during the Daud regime, was one of the outstanding figures of the Saur Revolution. He was a brilliant political strategist who charted his way to power removing many adversaries on his way. Amin had his base support among a cadre and air force officers whom he had recruited personally after April 27, 1978. Also he had consolidated his position by setting up a network of informers and reorganising the secret police under his personal control. That such a person could have been overthrown in this manner might be difficult to understand. But, the fact is that ever since he assumed full power in September last, Hafizullah Amin's hold on the affairs of the State seemed tenuous. He did not feel secure. President Amin rarely came out of his official residence. At least three distinct attempts were made, on 14 October, 27 November and 1 December 1979, to overthrow him before the final and decisive blow on 26 December 1979. A careful look would reveal a number of factors

—personal, ideological and external—inherent in Hafizullah Amin's ascent to power, which made his fall a matter of time.

The Revolution in Afghanistan had been brought about by the Khalq party on April 27, 1978 under the leadership of its founder —the verteran revolutionary, Noor Mohammad Taraki. In his early sixties, Taraki was a father-figure who symbolised the Saur Revolution. Amin had himself hailed Taraki as the "great leader" bearing "the torch of revolution" who was the inspiration of the party. While Taraki was called the "wise teacher", Amin was termed as "the loyal student." They had no fundamental differences about the programme and policies of the government. The elimination of President Taraki by Hafizullah Amin for whatever reasons—personal ambition or differences regarding the tactics to be adopted for implementing agreed policies, took away much of the legitimacy and sanctity of the April Revolution. There remained now no restrained sanction for a second rank party leader to overthrow him

There is no doubt that President Noor Mohammad Taraki, during a period of a year-and-a-half, was not able to make the Revolution a grand success. Notwithstanding the highly laudable socio-economic programme of the Khalq party, its enemies, viz, feudal aristocracy, rural oligarchy, religious bigotry, tribal conservatism, and reaction, continued to resist successfully its revolutionary plans. Lack of imagination and planning, undue haste, the, feverish revolutionary zeal and heavy-handed approach shown in bringing about for-reaching socio-economic changes in a highly coservative illiterate, feudal tribal society were bound to delay the desired results. But who was reponsible for these mistakes ? It is no secret that even when President Taraki was at the helm, it was Amin who really ran the show. An ideological hardliner and tough, often abrasive, Hafizullah Amin was known as "the strong man" His subsequent attempts to lay all the blame for errors of commission and ommission by the regime at the door of Taraki were not convincing.

There is a view shared by many of the supporters and sympathisers of the Afghan Revolution that a more restrained, if not conciliatory, attitude by the revolutionary government in Kabul towards its opponents might have enabled it to lessen its troubles and help in consolidating power. But Amin, who was the most hated man for the Afghan insurgents, could hardly perform this

role. A believer in strong-arm tactics, Amin was a man who "when told to take caution, goes like a tank." His rise to power marked a defeat for the moderate elements in the Khalq party.

The new Afganistan President, Babrak Karmal has denounced Hafizullah Amin as "a bloody dictator and agent of US imperialism". Mrs Taraki is also reported to have levelled similar charges against the executed leader. Such charges can, however, be brushed aside as revolutionary rhetoric to denigrate a fallen leader. But it is true that Amin, while occupying important Government and Party positions under Taraki, had carried out numerous purges in Party, bureaucracy, armed forces and even hospital staff, thereby critically narrowing the government's base of support. The victims included persons who had played very important roles during the April Revolution. In a bid to consolidate his position after deposing Taraki, Amin also purged pro-Taraki elements from the government, university and military posts and, thus, further reduced the base available to his Government. He could have managed to run the show had he pulled on well with the Soviet Union on whom the government in Kabul depended largely for military supplies, trade, fuel, economic assistance and political support. Unfortunately, Hafizullah Amin's relations with the Kremlin, too, cooled down. He asked Moscow to withdraw ambassador Alexander Puzanov and replace him by an acceptable person. Amin reportedly declined an invitation to visit Moscow to sort out differences. That the government of Hafizullah Amin had to deny reports that Kabul-Moscow relations were strained reflects upon the state of Soviet-Afghan ties during Hafizullah Amin's rule.

Nothing succeeds like success, so goes the saying. To his misfortune, Amin did not achieve any tangible success to strengthen the foundations of his rule. He failed to control the Muslim insurgency—the biggest problem facing the Afghan Government. Inspite of much publicised large-scale anti-insurgency operations by Amin's government, the rebels reportedly went on gaining successes. Army was getting enfeebled by continuous fighting against rebels and desertions. The situation seemedt o have deteriorated so much that, according to a report, 20 Soviet battalions were rushed into Afghanistan, in the beginning of November last, to protect bases there from attack by Islamic Mujahideen. Success in surmounting the insurgency eluded Amin, but differences between pro-Amin elements and his critics in the Party became acute.

The final developments leading to the downfall and execution of President Hafizullah Amin are shrouded in mystery. The Soviet Union says that it had sent military aid to Afghanistan under the December 1978 Soviet-Afghan friendship treaty after an urgent request was received from the Afghan leadership. But who represented the Afghan leadership making this request ? If it was Hafizullah Amin, then how did it happen that Amin was deposed and executed when Soviet troops had already arrived in Afghanistan ? Could the Soviet forces not protect the President ? Or, was the Soviet military aid requested for by some members in Amin's Government who wanted to remove him from power ?If yes, who were those leaders ? If the new President, Babrak Karmal was the person who invited Soviet assistance, then, in what capacity did he act ? He had not been a member of the government under Hafizullah Amin. Moreover, Babrak Karmal, according to reports, was not even present in Kabul when Soviet armed forces started entering Afghanistan. These and a host of similar questions need be answered before a clearer picture of events emerges.

One thing, however, is clear. Hafizullah Amin had considerable influence over sections of the armed forces. Reports indicate that these elements are putting up resistance to the new Afghan government. The government of Babrak Karmal, with the direct and active military support of the Soviet Union, would, no doubt, succeed in eliminating that resistance. But those pro-Amin elements, in addition to the Muslim insurgents, who have castigated Babrak Karmal as "another Soviet puppet", and who are now openly assured of foreign did and support, would make the task of consolidation of the new government difficult. The writing on the wall is clear. Afghanistan is in for continued instability for quite sometime.

Soviet Entry into Afghanistan : Strategic Perspectives

Swadesh Rana

The occurrence of another military coup in another small country does not normally add up to anything more than another addition to global statistics about growing militarism in the third